



## **Berlin Youth Baseball – Baserunning**

**Goal of this document:** Provide coaches, parents, and players with drills that can help youth understand baserunning strategies to move them around the bases and get them closer to scoring a run.

### **Running to first base (run past)**

It is critical to teach your youth players that first base is meant to be run through, meaning that if you hit the ball, and there is going to be a throw to first base, you run to first, touch it on the move, and continue past first all the way to the start of the outfield grass, thus keeping your momentum and high speed instead of slowing down to stop on the base.



### **Running to first base (extra bases, round it)**

It is also critical to teach your youth that if the ball is hit to the outfield and there is a chance a extra bases (double or triple) then as you run down to first you “round” the base or start to angle yourself and touch just the front left corner of the base. This can be taught by placing a cone a few feet from first base, in the baseline, and teaching the youth to run around that cone.



### **Running to 2<sup>nd</sup> base & 3<sup>rd</sup> base**

When you run to 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base and it's going to be a close play in the infield, it's important to teach your youth players to stop at the base (they should NOT run past the base like they do at first base). When it's an extra base it, into the outfield, you can teach your youth to “round” the base similar to like explained above for first base.

### **Running to home (run past)**

Home plate is similar to first base, you should teach your youth to run all the way to home, touch the plate in motion, and continue running until you reach the fence. This keeps your momentum going instead of stopping just short to stand on home.

### **Awaiting the next pitch (when you're not allowed to lead-off)**

It's important in younger leagues where leading off is not allowed, when a runner is on base, and is awaiting the pitcher to pitch to the batter, that the runner is in a proper runners position. The leg closest to the catcher should be up out in an L shape, and the closes catcher's side leg should be up on the toes, touching the edge of the base. The runners body should be facing the next base while their head is swiveled to look at the batter. Arms are up and ready to start running.



### **Running from first to second (groundball)**

Teaching your younger youth simple common plays is important to their success. For example, teaching them that if they are on first base, and the ball is hit on the ground, it doesn't matter how many outs, it doesn't matter where it's hit, they should always run to second base immediately, no hesitation.

### **Running from first to second (flyball)**

Flyballs are where most youth runners struggle. There are 2 scenarios

- 1) 0 or 1 outs: The runner should go ½ way to the next base, pause, watch the ball. If it's dropped, finish running to the next base. If it's caught, they must return to the original base and "tag up" before they can advance to the next base.
- 2) 2 outs: The runner should run immediately to the next base regardless.

### **Running from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> with nobody behind you on 1<sup>st</sup>**

Another important, yet complex situation for most young players is if they are the runner on 2<sup>nd</sup>, and there is nobody behind them on first base. This means there is no force out, so the runner does not have to run, and if they do run they must be tagged. There are multiple situations to cover with the youth

- 1.) 0 or 1 outs: If the ball is hit to 3B or SS, the runner should stop, hesitate, watch the throw, then run (if they are a fast runner). They need to hesitate because they do not want to runner into a tag and get out. If the ball is hit anywhere else, they should run immediately.
- 2.) 2 outs: If the ball is hit to 3B or SS, the runner should stop, hesitate, watch the throw, then run. They must hesitate because they don't want to run into a tag and be the 3<sup>rd</sup> out. If the ball is hit anywhere else, they should run immediately.

### **Sliding**

Teach your runners a proper slide (feet first, tuck one leg under, one leg out, arms up in the air). You never want youth to slide head first, as you want to avoid finger and head injuries. You want to teach them to slide on any close play (many leagues have rules that if you don't slide on a close play you're out). But also make sure the youth never slide at 1<sup>st</sup> Base, they always run.



### **Coaching signals (Don't watch the ball, watch the coach)**

While coaches may know the signals for when to run and when to stop, do not assume your young youth do. Teach them to watch the coach (not the ball), and if the coach is giving a big 1-arm circle that means "go", and if the coach is putting up two hands it means "stop". It's also important to teach the youth that if you here your coach say "back" that means to return to the previous base as fast as possible (this usually means there was a line drive, or a caught ball and could lead to a double play).



### **Running in the baseline**

Between each pair of bases (home to first, first to 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> to home) there is an imaginary lane where the runner must stay within (3 feet to either side). If the runner leaves this lane they will be called out for "leaving the baseline". This most commonly comes into play during a tag situation, where a defensive player is trying to tag the runner and the runner decides to run out of the baseline to avoid the tag. If they do so, they will be called out.



### **Advanced (3<sup>rd</sup> base leadoff foul territory)**

You want to teach the older youth that are allowed to leadoff, that they should leadoff from 3<sup>rd</sup> base well out in foul territory (still within the baseline). The reason being is if a runner gets hit with a ball in fair territory the runner is automatically out, so you want to avoid this situation. You can do so but leading off in foul territory, therefore if the runner gets hit with the ball they are in foul territory and thus are not called out.



### **Advanced: Leading off (when allowed)**

When taking a leadoff, it's important to shuffle towards the next base (as opposed to crossing your feet). You do this so your feet are not tangled up on a pickoff play back to the base. The size lead is very dependent on the speed of the runner (their ability to get back to the base) as well as the skill of the pitcher and their pickoff move.

